

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A system for mounting a rider to a snowboard, the system comprising:

a snowboard boot having a sole including a heel area, an arch area and a toe area;

a snowboard binding;

a first engagement member; and

a second engagement member;

wherein one of the first and second engagement members is mounted to the sole of the snowboard boot forward of the arch area and the other of the first and second engagement members is mounted to the binding;

wherein the first engagement member is adapted to mate with the second engagement member to releasably engage the snowboard boot to the binding;

wherein the first engagement member is an active engagement member that is movable, relative to the one of the sole of the snowboard boot or the binding to which the first engagement member is mounted, between a first state wherein the first engagement member does not engage the second engagement member and a second state wherein the first engagement member engages the second engagement member to [inhibit lifting] prevent release of the toe area of the boot from the binding during riding, and

wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state.

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23. (Amended) The system of claim ¹⁴[21]~~22~~, wherein the medial and lateral sides of the [wedge-shaped] cleat each further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the wider toe-end portion of the cleat is wider than the distance and the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.

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24. (Amended) A [The] system [of claim 2,] for mounting a rider to a snowboard, the system comprising:

67

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a snowboard boot having a sole including a heel area, an arch area and a toe area;
a snowboard binding;
a first engagement member; and
a second engagement member;
wherein one of the first and second engagement members is mounted to the sole of the
snowboard boot forward of the arch area and the other of the first and second engagement
members is mounted to the binding;

wherein the first engagement member is adapted to mate with the second engagement
member to releasably engage the snowboard boot to the binding;

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wherein the first engagement member is an active^{first} engagement member that is movable,
relative to the one of the sole of the snowboard boot or the binding to which the first engagement
member is mounted, between a first state wherein the first engagement member does not engage
the second engagement member and a second state wherein the first engagement member
engages the second engagement member to inhibit lifting of the toe area of the boot from the
binding during riding;

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wherein the active^{first} engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider
stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state;

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wherein the active^{first} engagement member is further automatically movable, in response to
the rider stepping into the binding, from the first state to the second state, wherein the second
engagement member is a cleat having a base mounted to one of the snowboard boot and the
binding, wherein the cleat further includes medial and lateral sides, and wherein at least one of
the medial and lateral sides tapers inwardly from a wider base-end portion of the cleat adjacent
the base to a narrower free-end portion of the cleat away from the base; and

wherein the medial and lateral sides of the [wedge-shaped] cleat each further tapers along
a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of
the cleat.

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28. (Amended) The system of claim²⁵~~27~~, wherein the medial and lateral sides of the
[wedge-shaped] cleat each further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion
of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the wider toe-end portion of

W8 *B*

the cleat is wider than the distance and the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.

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~~29. (Amended) The system of claim [3] 27, wherein the medial and lateral sides of the [wedge-shaped] cleat each further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the wider toe-end portion of the cleat is wider than the distance and the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.~~

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33. (Amended) A snowboard boot adapted for use with a binding to mount the snowboard boot to a snowboard, the binding including a pair of spaced apart engagement members, the snowboard boot comprising:
a sole; and
a cleat having a base that is supported by the sole, the cleat being adapted to be releasably engaged by the pair of spaced apart engagement members, the cleat including medial and lateral sides, wherein at least one of the medial and lateral sides tapers inwardly from a wider base-end portion of the cleat adjacent the base to a narrower free-end portion of the cleat away from the base, the at least one of the medial and lateral sides being adapted to separate the pair of spaced apart engagement members when the snowboard boot steps into the binding;

wherein the at least one of the medial and lateral sides of the cleat further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat.

Please cancel claim 44.

48. (Amended) ~~The snowboard boot of claim 33, wherein the pair of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance, wherein the cleat further tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the wider toe-end portion of the cleat is wider than the distance and the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat is narrower than the distance.~~

69

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51. (Twice Amended) ~~A snowboard boot adapted for use with a binding to mount the snowboard boot to a snowboard, the binding including a first engagement member, the snowboard boot comprising:~~

a sole; and

a second engagement member mounted to the sole to releasably engage the first engagement member;

wherein one of the first and second engagement members [include] is an active engagement member and another of the first and second engagement members is a compatible engagement member that is engageable with the active engagement member, the active engagement member being movable relative to the one of the binding or the sole to which the active engagement member is mounted, from a first state wherein the active engagement member does not engage the compatible engagement member to a second state wherein the active engagement member engages the compatible engagement member to prevent release of the second engagement member from the first engagement member during riding; and

wherein the second engagement member automatically disengages from the first engagement member in response to the snowboard boot ~~stepping out of engagement with the binding.~~

53. (Twice Amended) ~~The snowboard boot of claim 52, wherein the second engagement member [resists] prevents release from the first engagement member in response to a lifting force generated at the toe area of the snowboard boot.~~

54. (Amended) ~~A snowboard binding to mount a snowboard boot to a snowboard, the snowboard boot including a first engagement member, the snowboard binding comprising:~~

a base; and

a second engagement member, mounted to the base, that is adapted to mate with the first engagement member to releasably engage the snowboard boot to the binding, the second engagement member being an active engagement member that is movable relative to the base between a first state wherein the second engagement member does not engage the first engagement member and a second state wherein the second engagement member engages the first engagement member to [inhibit lifting] prevent release of the boot from the binding during

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~~riding, and wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the [rider] snowboard boot stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state.~~

~~73. (Amended) A [The] snowboard binding [of claim 55] to mount a snowboard boot to a snowboard, the snowboard boot including a first engagement member, the snowboard binding comprising:~~

~~a base; and~~

~~a second engagement member, mounted to the base, that is adapted to mate with the first engagement member to releasably engage the snowboard boot to the binding, the second engagement member being an active engagement member that is movable relative to the base between a first state wherein the second engagement member does not engage the first engagement member and a second state wherein the second engagement member engages the first engagement member to inhibit lifting of the boot from the binding during riding, and wherein the active engagement member is automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping out of the binding, from the second state to the first state;~~

~~wherein the active engagement member is further automatically movable, in response to the rider stepping into the binding, from the first state to the second state, wherein the first engagement member includes a cleat having a base mounted to a sole of the snowboard boot and medial and lateral sides, and wherein the second engagement member includes a pair of spaced apart engagement members each adapted to engage one of the medial and lateral sides of the cleat; and~~

~~wherein each of the medial and lateral sides of the cleat tapers along a length of the cleat from a wider toe-end portion of the cleat to a narrower heel-end portion of the cleat, and wherein the pair of spaced apart engagement members is spaced apart by a distance that is greater than the narrower heel-end portion of the cleat and smaller than the wider toe-end portion of the cleat.~~

~~74. (Twice Amended) A method of interfacing a first engagement member on a snowboard boot with a second engagement member, on a snowboard binding, that is engageable with the first engagement member to mount the snowboard boot to [a snowboard] the snowboard binding and prevent release of the snowboard boot from the snowboard binding during riding, wherein at least one of the first and second engagement members is an active engagement~~

Contradiction
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